

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 OMB-01 SCCT-01 SY-05 SR-02 ORM-01 VO-03 SCA-01

SCS-03 /087 W

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R 180920Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9605

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USUN NEW YORK 539

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

BANGKOK PASS SONGKHLA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR SREF MY

SUBJ: KHMER MUSLIM REFUGEES IN MALAYSIA

REF: KL 2003

1. LOCAL PRESS APRIL 18 REPORTS THAT 50 KHMER MUSLIM (CHAM)
REFUGEES HAVE ARRIVED IN KELANTAN AND ARE SEEKING TO STAY IN
MALAYSIA PERMANENTLY. ESCAPEES FLED TO BANGKOK BY SEA OVER A
WEEK AGO, THEN TOOK TRAIN TO GOLOK, SOUTHERN THAILAND, WHERE
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THEY CROSSED BORDER INTO KELANTAN. MALAY-LANGUAGE DAILY

"UTUSAN MALAYSIA" ALSO REPORTS THAT ABOUT 500 MORE KHMER MUSLIMS WANT TO MIGRATE TO MALAYSIA. CURRENTLY, KHMER REFUGEES ARE BEING LOOKED AFTER BY LOCAL INHABITANTS AND STATE OFFICIALS IN KELANTAN; VOLUNTARY AGENCIES HAVE DONATED FOOD, MONEY AND CLOTHING FOR THEIR UPKEEP. IT NOT YET CLEAR FROM PRESS REPORTS WHETHER GOM HAS DECIDED WHETHER TO GRANT PERMANENT STAY PERMITS.

2. SINCE VISIT OF HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER GHAZALI SHAFIE TO REFUGEE CENTER ON THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER LAST WEEK (PARA 6 REFTTEL), MALAY-LANGUAGE PRESS AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS HAVE FOCUSED ON PLIGHT OF MUSLIM REFUGEES. EDITORIALS HAVE CALLED UPON GOM TO RESETTLE CHAMS (THUS FAR NO MENTION MADE OF VIETNAMESE MUSLIMS) AND GIVE EMERGENCY RELIEF AID. MUSLIM MISSIONARY SOCIETY (PERKIM), FOR EXAMPLE, GAVE M\$10,000 (APPROX US\$ 4,500) DONATION TO KHMER EMBASSY FOR MUSLIM REFUGEE RELIEF (THIS SUM INCLUDED PERSONAL DONATION OF M\$2000 FROM FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN); KHMER EMBOFF ACCEPTED MONEY "WITH GRATITUDE" BUT HOW FUNDS WILL BE CHANNELLED TO KHMER REFUGEES IN THAILAND IS UNCLEAR. ALSO, NEWSPAPER "UTUSAN MALAYSIA" AND AGENCIES SUCH AS RED CROSS HAVE STARTED TO COLLECT FUNDS FOR KHMER MUSLIM REFUGEES HERE AND IN THAILAND.

3. COMMENT: AS DETAILED IN OTHER EMBASSY REPORTS, ALTHOUGH PRIME MINISTER HAS STATED MALAYSIA WILL ACCEPT BUT NOT ENCOURAGE REFUGEES, GOM HAS TAKEN RELATIVELY HARD LINE TO DISCOURAGE FLOW OF REFUGEES FROM CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM. (WE HAVE HEARD FROM GKR EMBASSY HERE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT CAMBODIANS ARE NOT BEING PERMITTED ENTER JOHORE FROM SINGAPORE.) HOWEVER, ARRIVAL OF KHMER MUSLIM REFUGEES IN KELANTAN INDICATES THAT RELIGIOUS FACTOR MAY OUTWEIGH FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AND GOM MAY EVENTUALLY AGREE TO RESETTLE SOME MUSLIMS.

UNDERHILL

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